

# Historic Preservation Commission OKs Beach Shack plan

By RACHEL SHUBIN  
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The owner of the Beach Shack Motel has cleared another hurdle in efforts to expand the 66-room building.

Applicant Cape Coachman LLC received approval from the Historic Preservation Commission during a meeting April 19. The Planning Board granted preliminary site plan approval previously.

The proposed site improvements include closing the opening between the two motel buildings, removing the tennis court, relocating the swimming pool and creating additional parking.

The Beach Shack is a three-story building that is a non-contributing structure located in the Historic District.

Attorney Anthony Monzo represented Cape Coachman with project manager Robert Shepanski.

"The applicant is proposing to do and has already received preliminary approval for front, rear and side elevations," Monzo said. "The existing corner on the southwest part of the property, with the apartments will be removed. The hotel building will be extended to match the existing structure's architectural details."

Two motel buildings are located to the rear of the Beach Shack that currently have a separation between them. The open space currently allows access to the parking lot at the back of the property. The plans call for connecting the two buildings on the second and third floors and building out the first floor for a new office to connect the breezeway to access the parking lot.

"The tennis court in the

rear is being removed and replaced with additional parking," Monzo said. "There is currently stacked parking that was approved by the Planning Board and there is a valet service at the breezeway area. A new parking plan has been presented to the Planning Board."

"Unrelated to the Beach Shack, there is a sidewalk that is being proposed along Beach Drive that will separate the back-out parking from beach traffic," Monzo said. "Part of that is a new sidewalk plan to create a safer route for pedestrians. This plan has been presented to the county as it is a county road."

The Beach Shack renovation project is set to go before the Planning Board in May for final approval.

"The building was built in the '70s and is utilitarian, with a stucco façade. The in-fill process is to streamline it and make the buildings look married and have better corridor access for people going upstairs and downstairs," said Shepanski, who noted he has been working with Coachman LLC since 2008.

Shepanski said the owners' quarters is being removed and rebuilt to update the style of the building with a cedar roof, ocean-view windows and balconies continuing with the lines of the existing building.

"We will add tempered-glass railings with aluminum posts, because right now it has concrete balconies with aluminum railings that we want to upgrade," Shepanski said. "The salt air has corroded them. The front porch will have cedar roofing."

The windows will be double-hung Anderson models

with grills between the glass. The building will be done primarily in stucco to match the existing building.

"What has drawn criticism over the years is the outdoor seating, which now our plan conforms with the city's outdoor seating ordinance," Monzo said. "There is a seating plan around the fire pit which brings this project into full compliance with what the city requires."

The pool will be relocated and replaced with a slightly larger one.

"Half the pool gets shaded by the building during the afternoon," Shepanski said. "With the second lot we can move it over and create a more guest-friendly area with pool lounge chairs. It will be surrounded by fencing and landscaping."

The materials list for the project was presented and discussed by board members. Chairman Warren Coupland asked about the horizontal siding and roof plans.

"On the side portion on the building, there is going to be painted clapboard siding," Shepanski said. "We have proposed a standing seam roof made with a hardy plank."

Board member Zachary Mullock asked about the windows on the first floor.

"The office doors will mimic the Rusty Nail windows," Shepanski said.

Board member David Clemans stated that he thought the site plan had good thinking and planning.

"Indisputably, this is an improved plan for this property," Clemans said. "The metal roof you're obviously not going to solder in place, but it will be prefabricated with the low seams that we like to see in Cape May."



Provided

The Historic Preservation Commission approved plans for expansion of the Beach Shack. The proposal still needs final approval from the Planning Board.

Shepanski stated that they are considering an inch and a quarter seams in addition to a colonial seam that is a true 1 inch.

Board member Crystal Hardin asked about a different consideration for the type of railing.

"In my opinion, from watching these glass railings that have gone up, long term they don't maintain their beauty," Hardin said. "Aesthetically they do the overall look of the Beach Shack an injustice. That and the fact of needing daily maintenance of the glass for the salt air. You're going to have to hire someone just to maintain that."

Shepanski stated that they would consider the glass railings.

"As part of our improvements, we are trying to streamline the whole building," Shepanski said. "We don't particularly like the railings that we have now because they are 20 years old."

Hardin stated she thought the railings are too modern for the Beach Shack look.

"It is a nice look but it

doesn't do your building justice," Hardin said. "The rest is fabulous."

Coupland reminded Monzo and Shepanski that the signage should conform to one of the approved fonts.

"You should be able to find something in there that reflects the character that you're trying to protect, while

staying within our ordinances," Coupland said. "We have a sign issue and consideration of the railing to examine."

Mullock stated that he has seen glass railings at other hotels on Beach Drive.

"I understand, but I do get Crystal's point that it doesn't exactly fit the Beach Shack," Mullock said.

Clemans disagreed with Hardin and Mullock, stating that he thought glass railings are acceptable.

"The consideration for glass railings is not from HPC, but a practical limitation that Crystal brought up," Coupland said. "Being that close to the ocean, keeping windows clean is a daily issue."

Clemans asked about the exterior lighting plan.

"We are building mounted lighting to add to the rear of the building," Shepanski said. "We have a lighting issue at the front and we are trying to maintain the lowest possible lighting requirements."

## Murphy signs bill banning oil drilling

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nor's Office, opening the Atlantic Ocean for offshore drilling would cause catastrophic and lasting economic harm to the state's 130-mile shoreline, which supports a tourism industry worth \$44 billion annually and attracts millions of visitors each year.

It also would put New Jersey's beaches, fisheries and marine life along the coast at great environmental risk. An oil spill such as the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil spill of 2010 in Louisiana could damage the fragile marine ecosystem, kill endangered and threatened species of fish and wildlife and poison the many types of fish and shellfish, affecting New Jersey's billion-dollar commercial and recreational fishing industry, according to a news release from Murphy's office.

"The Jersey shore tourism industry is a \$44 billion economic engine and supports more than 838,000 jobs. We cannot allow President Trump's anti-environmental and pro-polluter agenda to hijack our economy or our environment," said Ed Potosnak, executive director of the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters. "We commend Gov. Murphy for signing this important legislation into law to protect our environment, critical coastal economy and shore communities from dangerous offshore fossil fuel extraction."

The Center for American Progress stated "at a time when the Trump administration has made the federal government little more than a vehicle for the selloff of

public lands and waters to oil companies, New Jersey has taken a bold step to protect its beaches, waterways and its thriving coastal economy. Efforts to address climate change and protect sustainable industries like fishing and tourism are smart, forward-looking ocean policies that other coastal states should emulate."

State legislators also chimed in in favor of the ban.

"Offshore drilling would have a damaging impact to the Jersey shore, its multi-billion-dollar tourism industry and daily life for shore residents," Assemblyman Bob Andrzejczak said. "We should prohibit offshore drilling for oil and natural gas."

The legislation received a 37-0 vote in the Senate and a 72-1 vote in the Assembly. Bill sponsors include Sen.

Jeff Van Drew and Troy Singleton, as well as Assembly members R. Bruce Land, Andrzejczak and Vincent Mazzeo.

A delegation from Cape May including Mayor Chuck Lear, Deputy Mayor Shaine Meier, Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks and Cape May Lutheran Church pastor Jeff Elliott traveled to Point Pleasant to watch the governor sign the bill.

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